6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

A vast and mu[illegible]rm horde it is that besieges the trees; a people millions strong, each one of whom wages its own small war and combines with the rest in the greater struggle.

IV

In the three brothers, all that was best in this wild region could truly be said to have found some form of expression. Their reactions were at times incomprehensible—sudden reflexes resulting from a life utterly different in every way from our own and in some degree akin to the animals'. They were always together, not mixing with the other Shirians and building their own little separate shelter. Every night, when work was finished, they came to us, rubbing themselves against us and indicating by gestures what goods they would like for their pay.

They had certain phobias, the most interesting being a fear of nails. Carmine always had a long nail handy, and each evening he would hammer it into one of the hut-poles to hang up his gun and cartridge-case. This produced a terrible effect on one of the brothers. He would stand and watch as it paralysed, for all the world as though the nail was being driven into his own forehead. If Carmine showed him the nail, holding it out to him, he would cry '*Ma, ma*' and run off to hide in his little hut. Generally, however, he was most friendly, even affectionate, towards us. Carmine had once rashly promised to cut his hair for him, and since a haircut for one meant a haircut for everybody and the expedition's only pair of scissors was precious, we lost a whole day while my companion gained some experience of the barber's trade. The Indians spent their time looking at themselves in the glass and examining each other's coiffure for defects which they wanted attended to at once.

In imitation of the tales the Shirians told, Carmine had invented a terrifying personage called Barabàn, a kinsman of his, who lived somewhere over the mountains. Barabàn made such an impression on everyone that the myth became a real moral weapon and came in very useful when the Indians needed a little prodding. When Carmine told his tale, in a mixture of Shirian, Makiritari, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian, they would listen with eyes like saucers, in curiosity and fear: 'Barabàn and a hundred robbers and a hundred fierce dogs—they live in the trees like monkeys—eat women and children, cooked—

similar to that presented here, and I regard my own efforts in this area as supplemental to the generally excellent ethnographic work of Zerries (1964) and Schuster (1958). Without genealogical data it is not possible to estimate the degree to which marriage practices deviate from stated preference, nor to grasp the importance of these deviant cases in Yąnomamö politics.

The histories of the five villages are equally important, as they illustrate the role of warfare in determining settlement pattern, the development of political ties between villages, and the process of village splitting. These factors provide the matrix within which the genealogical data become meaningful.

Piecing together the history of these groups of villages proved to be a difficult task. The geographical area under discussion is unexplored and unmapped. Not even major rivers are accurately known in their upper courses, so that of two published versions of the Siapa River I have had to choose the one most consistent with the account given to me by the Indians. The major problem in this regard has been the identification of a large river known to the Yąnomamö as the Shukumöna-u, whose headwaters lie near the source of the Orinoco River. According to my Yąnomamö informants (people who have either lived on this river or have visited or raided villages located on it), the Shukumöna-u, in its middle course, is nearly as large as the Orinoco at its junction with the Mavaca River. It flows in a westerly

direction, and lies between the Mavaca River and a series of mountains. At a few points the Shukumöna-u may be reached from the Mavaca tributaries in less than a day's walk.

Early maps of Venezuela show the Siapa River extending nearly to the headwaters of the Orinoco River, as the Indians claim the Shukumöna-u does, and lying between the Mavaca River and the mountains that separate Brazil from Venezuela. I have therefore used a 1936 edition of a map published by the Venezuelan National Cartographic Office for the course of the Siapa River, which I take to be the Shukumöna-u of the Yąnomamö. I have used more recent maps, also obtained from the same office, for the course of the Orinoco, and have drawn the Mavaca River from information I obtained from the Indians and my own exploration of this river up to the village of Iwahikoroba-tedi, which I unsuccessfully attempted to contact in September of 1965. Maps B and C, pp. 54 and 148, are based on these sources.

In reconstructing the history of the village movements, particularly in locating old habitation sites, I have relied on a few well-known geographical landmarks along the Orinoco River. Specifically, two large rapids have guided me; Penascal, above Ruemi-u (Shuwimöwi-bora in Yąnomamö) and Raudal Guaharibo (Karëbë-bora in Yąnomamö) near the present village of Kashorawë-tedi.

I employed three sources of information to locate present villages. First, my own knowledge for those villages I personally visited. Second, information from James P.